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Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and Economic Commission for Europe

Summary

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields contains information on resolutions and decisions adopted or endorsed at the twenty-ninth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, held in Doha from 13 to 15 December 2016, the thirty-second session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in New York on 30 January 2017, and the sixty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Europe, held in Geneva on 26 and 27 April 2017. The full texts of the resolutions and decisions are available at www.regionalcommissions.org/our-work/regional-commissions-sessions-resolutions-and-decisions.

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I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

1. At its thirty-second session, held in New York on 30 January 2017, the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean adopted resolution 716 (PLEN.32), on the basis of which the following draft resolution is submitted for action by the Economic and Social Council:

Draft resolution
Admission of Turkey as a member State of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting resolution 716 (PLEN.32) of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its thirty-second session (see annex),

Approves the admission of Turkey as a member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Annex

Resolution 716 (PLEN.32)

Admission of Turkey as a member State of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Bearing in mind that the Commission was established by the Economic and Social Council by its resolution 106 (VI) of 25 February 1948, in which the Council stated that membership of the Commission shall be open to States Members of the United Nations in Northern, Central and South America and in the Caribbean area and to France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,

Bearing in mind also that the Commission was established on the basis of the participation of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, plus those that have had special relations of a historical, cultural, geographical or economic nature with the region,

Recalling that, in that spirit, the Commission subsequently admitted the following countries: Spain in 1979, Portugal in 1984, Italy in 1990, Germany in 2005, Japan in 2006, the Republic of Korea in 2007 and Norway in 2015,

Considering that the Government of Turkey has communicated to the Commission, through the Executive Secretary, its desire to be admitted as a member of the Commission,[1]

1. *Welcomes* the request from the Government of Turkey that the country be admitted as a member of the Commission;

2. *Recommends* to the Economic and Social Council that it approve the admission of Turkey as a member of the Commission and authorize to this effect the

[1] LC/L.4259(PLEN.32/4).

amendment of paragraph 3(a) of the terms of reference of the Commission to include the name of Turkey after that of the Republic of Korea.

II. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

A. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

2. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twenty-ninth session in Doha from 13 to 15 December 2016. The session, which concluded with the adoption of the Doha Declaration on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted a number of resolutions relating to the programme of work of ESCWA, a summary of which is set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Summary of the Doha Declaration on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

3. The representatives of the member States of ESCWA, assembled in Doha at the twenty-ninth session of the Commission, held from 13 to 15 December 2016, reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. They recalled ESCWA resolution 322 of 16 December 2015 on the ESCWA plan of action to support member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially incorporating the Agenda's Goals in national development plans, and agreed on the need to support least developed countries and to assist them in achieving a qualitative development shift, and to support war-torn and conflict-affected countries. They supported efforts to achieve gender equality and empower women, in line with countries' domestic systems and legislation and would strive to strengthen the role of women in all areas, and considered this objective a regional priority.

5. They appreciated the constructive role undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat in supporting the participation of Arab countries in the preparatory process for developing the 2030 Agenda and requested the secretariat to continue supporting the implementation process in line with the strategies approved by member States, which it developed for that purpose. In that context, the Member States requested the secretariat to focus on the following:

(a) Continue to produce informative material on the implementation of the Agenda at the national level and to focus on local development requirements in rural and urban areas;

(b) Prepare a concept paper on establishing an Arab forum for financing sustainable development in the region, which complements the role of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development;

(c) Prepare working papers on the interlinkages between the Agenda's economic, social, environmental, political/institutional and cultural dimensions and its 17 goals, and on the role of the various actors in its implementation, including Governments, civil society and the private sector;

(d) Develop approaches that facilitate incorporating and adapting the Agenda and its Goals and targets nationally and regionally, including an approach to identify sets of interlinked goals drawn from national priorities, so as to ensure effectiveness

and efficiency; and implement programmes to build national capacity and transfer knowledge to benefit from regional and international initiatives;

(e) Prepare training material and programmes and the necessary guides to develop national capacity and assist decision makers and development partners in the implementation process, including parliamentarians and civil society organizations;

(f) Continue to develop analysis tools that assist in determining interlinkages between goals, in accordance with country specificities and national plans, including network analysis, modelling and forecasting, and work with member States to build capacity in this field;

(g) Build national capacity to prepare reports on progress achieved in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and disseminate existing approaches to drafting such reports;

(h) Assist Arab countries in developing appropriate institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms between entities in national statistical offices, so as to improve efficiency in monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets;

(i) Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the availability of good quality statistics for use in preparing indicators to measure progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in collaboration and coordination with the secretariat of the Arab Working Group on Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators and national statistical offices;

(j) Identify a narrow set of indicators, based on national and regional priorities, while taking into account the capacity of Arab countries to provide the necessary indicators in line with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and international standards, so as to periodically monitor the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Resolutions of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Resolution 323 (XXIX) Adoption of the strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019

6. The Commission endorsed the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019 and noted comments by member States for inclusion in the programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019.

Resolution 324 (XXIX) Adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

7. The Commission adopted the recommendations set out in the reports of its subsidiary bodies and requested the Executive Secretary to continue following up on their implementation.

8. It invited member States to put into place the necessary measures to ensure the implementation of the recommendations set out in those reports.

Resolution 325 (XXIX) Adoption of the proposed amendments to the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017

9. The Commission adopted the proposed amendments to the programme of work for the period 2016-2017.

10. It requested the secretariat to follow up on the implementation of the programme of work and include therein the necessary activities to address any challenges that may emerge in the Arab region.

Resolution 326 (XXIX) Justice for the Palestinian people: 50 years of Israeli occupation

11. The Commission welcomed the accession of the State of Palestine to international treaties, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols, and supported efforts for Palestine to accede to all related treaties.

12. It called upon member States to: (a) increase official activities supporting the Palestinian people within member States and through diplomatic missions; and (b) strive to include an item on the Palestinian cause and the rights of the Palestinian people in general in as many regional and international events and conferences as possible.

13. The Commission requested the secretariat to continue supporting the Palestinian people and its institutions through the following:

(a) Increase activities on Palestine and organize special activities so as to raise awareness of the Palestinian people's rights and of Israeli violations of international law, provide support to the Government of Palestine in implementing the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022 and support Palestinian endeavours to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) Build partnerships with international, regional and national bodies, and strengthen research and technical activities aimed at supporting Palestinian refugees;

(c) Coordinate and collaborate with relevant Palestinian entities to develop an ESCWA media and communications strategy aimed at increasing global awareness of the Palestinian cause;

(d) Continue to monitor and evaluate the repercussions of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people and for the economic and social development of current and future generations;

(e) Strengthen efforts to calculate the impact of the Israeli occupation and, in this context, build partnerships with all relevant actors;

(f) Strive to establish a specialized unit on issues related to Palestine and its people, and continue supporting the Palestinian people to realize all its rights guaranteed by United Nations resolutions and international treaties and charters.

Resolution 327 (XXIX) Working mechanisms of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

14. The Commission affirmed the important role of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development as a regional platform where stakeholders can address sustainable development issues from an integrated perspective, consider formulations, frameworks and follow-up and review mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and contribute to building a unified position on the opportunities and challenges of achieving sustainable development in the Arab region.

15. It invited presentations of national and regional experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including voluntary national reports on progress in this regard, at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development to exchange expertise, experiences and lessons learned.

16. The Commission endorsed the annexed terms of reference, which organize the working mechanisms of the Forum in a manner that guarantees its effectiveness and success in strengthening regional cooperation and coordination to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Annex

Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

Terms of reference

Aim of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development aims to stimulate and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to establish follow-up and review frameworks and mechanisms in the Arab region as follows:

- Provide a platform to discuss transnational issues from a perspective that takes into account integration between sectors and that targets government and non-government organizations, including civil society organizations, the private sector, parliaments and think tanks
- Encourage Arab countries to translate their commitments to the principles and Goals of the 2030 Agenda into integrated strategies, programmes and policies that promote positive interactions between Goals and targets
- Determine common regional goals and emerging challenges, and promote consistency between national development plans and strategies and regional priorities
- Strengthen regional and international cooperation to implement, follow up and review the 2030 Agenda, including cooperation between Arab countries and trilateral cooperation, and identify methods to finance development and build strong partnerships between countries and across regions based on peer learning and the exchange of expertise and best practices
- Assist in mobilizing the necessary implementation methods to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, including the development of statistical systems, science, research, technology and innovation
- Encourage Arab States to conduct voluntary national reviews in line with guidelines set out in the 2030 Agenda, and submit them to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
- Establish a network of practitioners to prepare voluntary national reviews aimed at assisting member States to exchange expertise and lessons learned and to strengthen their capacity to prepare reports and related documents

Venue of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Arab Forum is held at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Beirut. Any Arab State can submit a request to host the Forum to the secretariat for approval subject to the facilities and technical and financial support the hosting State can provide to facilitate the Forum's work and organization.

Date and frequency of the sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum is convened annually (or according to necessity) at least three to four months prior to the holding of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, so as to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the report. The Arab Forum is held concurrently with other regional forums organized by the United Nations regional commissions.

Secretariat of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

ESCWA fulfils the role of the Forum's secretariat. The Forum is organized by a joint committee comprising ESCWA, the League of Arab States and United Nations regional coordination mechanisms.

Participants at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum is attended by representatives of Arab Governments and governmental and non-governmental regional organizations, civil society, academic institutions, the private sector, parliaments and related financial institutions, including regional development banks, so as to ensure partnerships, integrated roles, interaction and cooperation between sustainable development stakeholders in the Arab region.

Agenda of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The secretariat determines the Forum's agenda based on proposals by the joint committee. Agenda items are consistent with development priorities in Arab countries and with issues under consideration by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The agenda may also contain items on initial presentations of voluntary national reports, before submission to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Input of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum provides an opportunity to discuss several regional and national reports and scientific papers on development in the Arab region and on progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the regional level, in line with agreed goals and targets. The Forum also provides the opportunity to review the outcomes of various regional meetings on the 2030 Agenda and its Goals and targets. The Forum's agenda may contain presentations on the key outcomes of the following:

(a) Arab ministerial councils and ESCWA subcommittees concerned with development, including those specializing in specific Goals of the 2030 Agenda;

(b) Regional conferences on the 2030 Agenda, especially those organized under the regional coordination mechanism;

(c) Regional events on various related issues, such as financing development, technology and statistics, and events that highlight the operationalization of partnerships with parliaments, civil society organizations, the private sector and universities.

Outcomes of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum issues a summary report, submitted to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as part of regional contributions to the follow-up on the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. Its outcomes are also presented to the ESCWA ministerial session and its Executive Committee and to the

Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States and related Arab ministerial councils.

Resolution 328 (XXIX) Technical cooperation to meet the needs and priorities of member States

17. The Commission commended the efforts of the secretariat in linking its technical cooperation work with its other core functions of research and analysis and consensus-building to support policy formulation.

18. It urged the secretariat to continue strengthening strategic partnerships between United Nations technical cooperation programmes and member States and to promote inclusive South-South cooperation.

19. The Commission requested the secretariat to adopt a programmatic approach based on specific plans for long-term technical cooperation between ESCWA and member States, and to enhance accountability.

B. Economic Commission for Europe

20. At its sixty-seventh session, held in Geneva on 26 and 27 April 2017, the Economic Commission for Europe adopted a number of decisions, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Decisions of the Economic Commission for Europe

Decision A (67) Adoption of the High-level statement

21. The Economic Commission for Europe adopted a High-level statement (E/ECE/1483), in which the Commission underlined that the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) provides a unique opportunity to celebrate the achievements created through regional cooperation among its member States under changing circumstances. It is also an occasion to reflect on the challenges ahead and how these can be addressed, building on what has already been accomplished.

22. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the UNECE region will require a strong focus on issues such as poverty reduction, inclusive and sustained economic growth, productive employment and environmental protection, which are inherently interlinked and require an integrated response. Gender equality and the empowerment of women also need to be considered across all sectors and areas of activity. UNECE can facilitate effective solutions by strengthening cross-sectoral work across its programmes.

23. UNECE, as 70 years ago, constitutes one of the key working pan-European platforms to promote economic cooperation in the region. It is vital to strengthen discussions that already take place within UNECE on finding additional synergies, removing barriers and laying the foundations for greater economic integration in the UNECE region.

Decision B (67) Establishment of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

24. The Commission decided to establish the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region, which would serve as a regional mechanism to follow-up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to convene it annually in Geneva in 2018 and 2019, in close cooperation with the entities of the regional United Nations system.

25. The Commission requested the secretariat to develop the agenda of each Regional Forum in close consultation with member States and to align it with the respective themes and programme of work of the High-level Political Forum, with a focus on those aspects that are particularly relevant to the UNECE region, and to submit the outcome of the Regional Forum, in the form of a summary produced by its Chair, to the High-level Political Forum, as part of the regional contributions to the global follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Decision C (67) Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management

26. The Commission decided to engage with the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM:Europe), to gain a better understanding of how geospatial information can complement and support existing UNECE activities, particularly in the area of reviewing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, and to present a detailed proposal for collaboration between the two bodies.

Decision D (67) Road Safety Fund

27. The Commission welcomed the decision of the Inland Transport Committee to look into the possibility of establishing a Road Safety Fund through multi-stakeholder and intergovernmental expert consultations, with a view to developing a concrete proposal for the consideration of the Secretary-General in due course, and encouraged member States to become involved in this process.

Decision E (67) Decision 1 on the Ministerial Resolution adopted at the seventy-ninth session of the Inland Transport Committee

28. The Commission took note of the report of the Inland Transport Committee at its seventy-ninth annual session and welcomed the ministerial resolution on "Embracing the new era for sustainable inland transport and mobility" (ECE/TRANS/2017/2). The Commission considered favourably the question of mandating the Committee to report on an annual basis to both the Commission and, for information purposes, to the Economic and Social Council. To this end, the Commission decided to transmit to the Economic and Social Council a draft resolution for its consideration and, possibly, adoption (see annex).

Annex

The Economic and Social Council,

Considering that, under the guidance of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Inland Transport Committee can contribute substantively to the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Acknowledging the importance of harmonized global regulatory governance in inland transport and the need to promote and facilitate universal geographical coverage of the United Nations transport Conventions,

Welcoming the outcome of the ministerial meeting of the Inland Transport Committee, held on 21 February 2017, and the resolution on "Embracing the new era for sustainable inland transport and mobility",

Noting the recommendation of the Economic Commission for Europe,

Decides to mandate the Inland Transport Committee of ECE to report to the Economic and Social Council on an annual basis for information purposes, while leaving the organizational structure of the ECE secretariat as well as the

programme-budgeting functions and oversight unchanged, paying special attention to issues of global regulatory governance through the United Nations transport conventions and other means.